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# Guardian East

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# Message to the troops



## How culture affects our mission

By 1st Sgt. Thomas Hayes

"Drita Perezic may be the one person who is the greatest combat multiplier in MNB-East," said Col. Michael Hoffpaur, MNB(E)'s deputy commander, civil military operations.

"Her advice to the command group and staff is completely unbiased, well thought out, and backed up with on-the-ground experience. I know of no other person as well versed in the history and culture of Kosovo as Drita," Hoffpaur said.

Drita Perezic is MNB(E)'s cultural advisor.

The cultural advisor is a special assistant and principal advisor to the command group on issues relating to Balkan history, religion, norms, customs and trends.

"What I attempt to do is look at how the culture — how the people — of Kosovo impact operations," Perezic said.

In military parlance, she explained, the populace is key terrain and key leaders are decisive terrain. The social structure, the way in which societies are built, becomes the command and control of that populace.

"So how does that impact you and how do you impact that?" she said.

"We've got something called the cultural gap in assessing ethnic conflict," Perezic said. "What happens is as an outsider looking in we use something called the self-reference criteria; we compare everything we're seeing to what we know to be true, right, wrong, appropriate or inappropriate. We then apply these assumptions that we've made to these people



**Drita Perezic**  
**MNB(E) Cultural Advisor**

and it skews our decision making, because now what we're doing is we're saying 'Oh well, they're too emotional, they don't know what they're doing, whatever it is whether it is patronizing or sometimes off the mark completely. The point is not to agree with or approve - it is to understand what is driving the train and how that affects you can affect that."

"I absolutely adore this division," she said. "It is an honor and privilege to be with this division once again, so my last ride around here will be with the same guys I came to Kosovo with."

"Over time soldiers come in and they have a frame of reference that extends to the amount of time on their orders, so their start and end point is when they got here and when they leave," she said.

"They judge their success or failure, whatever that may be, based on that window of time. I have been privileged enough to watch since 1999 to say, 'Those Army values that you soldiers live by every single day are the greatest contribution you could make to the

safety and security to Kosovo, because the people of Kosovo have watched you lead by example every time a rotation has come in here.

"And so you don't see these changes over time, but the way the soldiers have impacted the people of Kosovo is fascinating to me."

"It's not that these people are devoid of the idea of duty,

**Advisor continued on page 21**

SEE THE PHOTO OF THE DAY  
[www.mnbe.hqusareur.army.mil](http://www.mnbe.hqusareur.army.mil)

On the cover: Photo by Spc. Whitney Hughes  
Staff Sgt. Konstantin Bakaev, a Russian senior recon sergeant with the 13th Tactical Group's Recon Platoon, climbs through deep snow during a routine patrol in the village of Tuxhevc, Feb. 26.

### Guardian East

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#### About Guardian East

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# MNB(E) paralegal earns prestigious award

Story and photo by Sgt. Steve Ducharme

Staff Sgt. Osvaldo Martinez, a paralegal for the Judge Advocate General's office at Camp Bondsteel, has been awarded the "Sgt. Eric L. Coggins Award" for his outstanding performance as a paralegal NCO.

Each year, one soldier from the active Army or Army Reserves earns this prestigious award.

Only one and Martinez was humbled by the comparison to Coggins.

"He was a great soldier and paralegal," Martinez said. "To receive this award tells me that my JAG leadership views me in the same way Coggins was viewed."

Coggins was a soldier on his way to a stellar military career before it was cut short by cancer.

Prior to the Gulf War, Coggins volunteered for duty in Korea where his exceptional skills as a legal specialist and a leader led to his selection as NCOIC of the Camp Casey legal office, according to the Department of the Army. He was still a specialist.

After Korea, Coggins volunteered for duty in Kuwait, where he became NCOIC of the Camp Doha legal office. There he excelled as a soldier and ran a "frontier" legal office under difficult conditions.

In addition, Coggins volunteered for squad automatic weapons and tank gunnery training. He became so proficient that he was selected as gunner on the commander's tank.

Shortly after the Gulf War, Coggins was diagnosed with liver cancer. He died at age 23.

The Coggins award was not a goal Martinez worked toward.

"I don't go to work every day with the idea of trying to win

the Coggins Award," said the Louisiana native. "I just try hard to be the best leader, soldier and paralegal I was taught to be."

Martinez, a member of HHC, 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, views the JAG office as a machine with many moving parts. He tries to ensure the office has what it needs to be successful. He also wants every soldier who comes into the JAG office to get the best service possible.

While taking care of soldiers in need of legal services, Martinez makes certain his own soldiers are not neglected and get the training they need. This gained the respect of both subordinates and superiors.

"We're very proud of him," said Capt. Karin Mallari, deputy command judge advocate for HHC, 3rd Bde, 1st ID. "It's a distinguished award and he is very deserving. He keeps us running here and is an outstanding NCO."

On March 7, Multi-National Brigade (East) Commander Brig. Gen. Daniel Keefe presented Martinez with a commander's coin in recognition of his award as well as for his performance in Kosovo.

"Since becoming associated with the company, Martinez has supported everything we do," said 1st Sgt. Clifford Lowe. "He's the epitome of what an NCO is."

Family and faith are what drive Martinez to succeed.

"By far, both my wife and my son drive me to exceed the standard," he said. "But more importantly, what drives me is the Lord. The work that I do, I do as I am doing it for him."

Martinez has no plans to rest on his laurels. He has his sights set on making the E-7 list this year and being selected as an observer/controller at Fort Polk, La.



Staff Sgt. Osvaldo Martinez coaches a soldier in marksmanship at Camp Bondsteel's weapons trainer.



# Soldier brings Comic relief to life in green

By Spc. Catherine Caruso



For “A KFOR Christmas” at Camp Magrath, Spc. Derek Chandler had supply issue chem-lights for the Christmas trees, the commo shop call Santa Claus, and the medics provide holiday cheer to the troops with the help of select pharmaceuticals.

And who is Chandler to wield this kind of power? He’s the one *forced* to draw the infamous cartoons, like the one described above, skewering officers, NCOs, and the common tanker alike until, as he insists, “his fingers bleed.”

Actually, said Capt. David Guthrie, commander of HHC, 2-63 Armor Battalion, he isn’t *forcing* Chandler to draw anything. In his version, he stumbled across Chandler’s talent at the Mission Rehearsal Exercise, prior to arriving in Kosovo.

“One night he was on radio watch and he did this cartoon, ‘Mrs. Headhunter,’” Guthrie said.

The comic morphed the HHC “Headhunter” logo from a muscled forearm holding a severed head by the hair, to a strong woman holding a severed Headhunter’s head by the hair. It noted that behind every “Headhunter,” was a very patient woman.

“Yeah, the CO decided I needed an additional duty,” Chandler said of Guthrie’s subsequent tasking to create more cartoons for the education and edification of the battalion during their deployment.

But Guthrie said while cartoonist became part of the multitasked Chandler’s job description (he’s a transportation specialist serving as a radio-telephone operator in the HHC orderly room), he thinks Chandler can handle the pressure.

“He jokes I work him until his fingers bleed. The truth is, he’s a good worker... believe me, no one is cracking the whip too hard,” Guthrie said.

And while no NCO, officer, or put-upon tanker is safe from the pen of Camp Magrath’s cartoonist in residence, Chandler’s own blood has yet to be spilled in the pursuit of satirizing life at Camp Magrath.

According to Chandler, his hobby really started before he joined the military, when his girlfriend (now wife) Melanie was hospitalized for several months. During her stay, she asked Chandler to keep her apprised of what was happening out in “the world.”

“I didn’t know what to write, so I just started drawing,” Chandler said. “I drew her a comic a day the whole time (she was hospitalized).”

The doodles became a running series in which a super-heroic Chandler schemed various ways to break Melanie free (“You know, in the comic book world I have huge biceps and stuff,” he admitted).

Chandler’s career in the Army followed a similar path. Having always wanted to serve in the military, he decided to join as a Reservist before marrying Melanie and settling down.

He graduated basic training on Sept. 12, 2001.

In fact, when cleaning TA-50 for turn in, his platoon was listening to the radio for the first time in months when the music was interrupted by the reports of the hijacked planes.

Many of the basic trainees’ friends and families, including



**Spc. Derek Chandler, a transportation specialist and radio-telephone operator with HHC, 2-63rd Armor Battalion, works on one of his characters after duty hours recently.**

Melanie, were to fly that day. It was hours before Chandler learned she was safe at home; her flight had never made it off the ground.

So, two months after his mobilization ended, Chandler made another trip to the recruiter's office.

Having chosen Germany as a duty station so he and his new wife could explore Europe, Chandler reported to his new assignment and was immediately notified he was being deployed.

He didn't even have a chance to move his household goods, which remain in Salt Lake City with his "patient woman," Melanie.

Which was how he found himself in the field one evening, doodling to kill the time last August during the MRE.

Every week or two, a new cartoon is posted near the motor pool- the one place where everyone goes, Chandler said, and a frequent target for Chandler's wit.

Sgt. Mathew Malcolm, maintenance supervisor for Quality Assurance/Quality Control, stars in one strip, enforcing the performance of "operator level services and

[www.mnbe.hqusaureur.army.mil](http://www.mnbe.hqusaureur.army.mil)

tasks" on the battalion vehicles.

Whether it was a dead-on depiction is up for debate.

Malcolm said he knows he has a reputation for toeing the line, but that it's part of his job, keeping soldiers safe by fixing what needs to be fixed.

He's not convinced the cartoon rendition bears much of a resemblance to the original, but, "it must have been close, because everyone knew it was me," he admitted.

In general, very few things are too sacred for Chandler to skewer, from Washington war rooms to complacency on guard duty, Guthrie said.

"Everyone wants a caricature of themselves now... the people he's (lampooned) the worst are actually proud of it," said Guthrie.

Malcolm said the only thing Chandler owes him is a cleaner copy, in color.

In fact, lately Chandler has been getting so many requests for T-shirt designs, portraits, and personal parodies he hasn't had time to produce new cartoons.

He even painted the company's mascots for the Morale, Welfare and Recreation building, and was awarded an Army Achievement Medal for his contribution to unit morale.

Next, the power of Chandler's pen will have the camp's first sergeants doing pushups on his desk. At least he will until he turns that drawing over to the sergeant major who requested it.

So far, the only blood drawn has been in Chandler's illustrations. And his targets don't seem to mind. In fact, they seem flattered.

## Peacekeeper profile



### Maria Hamelers

**Age:** 33

**Rank:** Staff Sgt.

**MOS:** 79S, career counselor

**Unit:** HHC, 3rd Brigade

**Camp:** Monteith

**Hometown:** Wheeling, W. Va.

**What are you good at doing?** Service soldiers and help them make good and informed decisions about their careers.

**Why did you join the Army?** I wanted to serve my country. Also, all the travel is not bad.

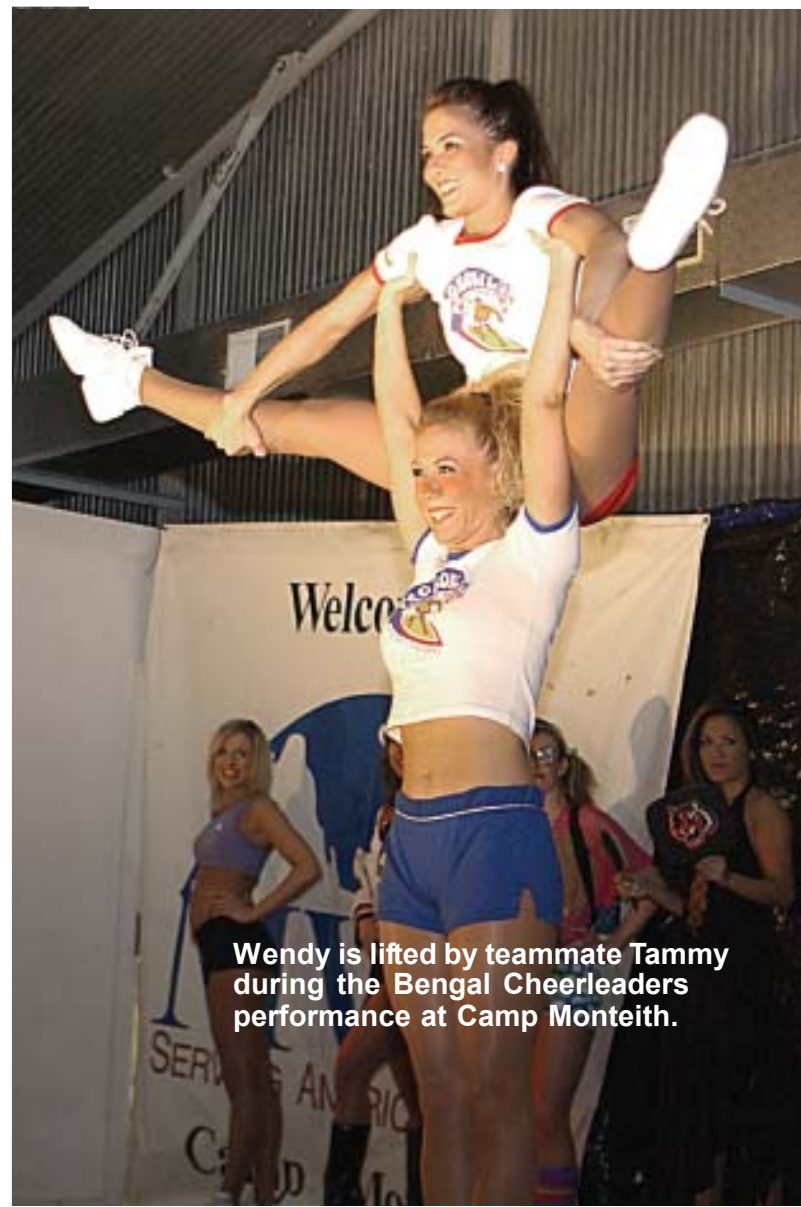




Bengals Cheerleaders Jessica and Christi are all smiles as they prepare for a UH-60 Black Hawk orientation ride. They flew from Camp Monteith over the MNB(E) area of operations, Mar 12.



Bengals Cheerleader Michelle gives the troops a salute during a performance at Camp Monteith.



Wendy is lifted by teammate Tammy during the Bengal Cheerleaders performance at Camp Monteith.



# Bengal Cheerleaders



## raise spirits

By Spc. Matthew Lang

Photos by Capt. David Matzel

Screams and howls filled the camp theaters and field houses in Multi-National Brigade (East) as 12 Cincinnati Bengal cheerleaders spent a week performing for and visiting with KFOR service members.

The cheerleaders, known as the "Ben-Gals," traveled to Camps Bondsteel, Magrath, Monteith and KFOR Headquarters in Pristina from March 9 through 15 to boost morale and show their appreciation for the U.S. and multinational service members stationed in Kosovo.

"You guys do so much for us," said the Ben-Gals director, Charlotte. (For privacy reasons, the cheerleaders declined to give their last names.) "It makes us feel wonderful to come over here and do something for you."

In the states, the Ben-Gals earn their stripes cheering for the Cincinnati Bengals, a professional football team. This was their first visit to Kosovo, a trip much appreciated by U.S. soldiers.

"Events like these are great inspirations and motivations to continue with this rotation," said Spc. Joseph Pixo, a fuel

and electrical system repairman with the 201st Logistic Task Force. "It helps brighten up everyone's outlook here."

He added that the visit helps soldiers realize "people do care that we are serving our country."

The cheerleaders were just as impressed with the troops.

"With all the hate in the world it's amazing that soldiers are keeping peace here when there's barely any peace around the whole world," said Kristen, a Ben-Gals cheerleader.

It was Kristen's older brother, Brandon, a soldier based at Camp Bondsteel, who helped bring the Ben-Gals to Kosovo.

The shows included singing, trivia questions for prizes, a rapping contest and different styles of dancing. The cheerleaders signed hundreds of autographs and posed for photographs.

"I want to say thank you to everyone, all the men and women, whether or not it's a hostile area or not," Charlotte said. "We really appreciate you sacrificing not only your time with your family, but yourselves, to save our country and to make everything that we have in America possible."

"The difference you make here will change many lives," she added.



Capt. Bernie Stone, commander of Bravo Company, 1-63 Artillery Battalion, takes Cincinnati Bengals cheerleaders Traci and Tammy for a ride on the M1A1 Abrams tank at Camp Monteith, March 12.



**Kristen Schneider, a Cincinnati Bengals cheerleader, hugs her brother, Spc. Brandon Schneider, at Pristina Airport, March 9.**

**Photo by Spc. Matthew Lang**



# Brother-sister connection brings cheerleaders to MNB(E)

Story and photos by Spc. Matthew Lang

What started out with something as simple as being lost on Camp Bondsteel and a little small talk turned into a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a soldier serving in Multi-National Brigade (East) and his little sister.

On March 9, Spc. Brandon Schneider, a communications intelligence specialist with 101st Military Intelligence Battalion, and Kristen Schneider, a Cincinnati Bengals cheerleader saw each other for the first time in a year when 12 members of her cheerleading squad arrived in Kosovo to entertain U.S. and multinational service members stationed at Camps Bondsteel, Magrath, Monteith, and KFOR Headquarters in Pristina.

"I can't believe this is really happening," said Brandon, standing behind a glass partition at Pristina Airport anxiously searching for his sister as the squad walked through customs.

When they made eye contact, Kristen ran to the glass wall. They simultaneously placed their hands palm to palm on the wall.

"It was cruelty," said Kristen, who is 20, three years younger than her brother. "I couldn't hug him or talk to him."

The frustration was momentary.

"When I finally got through customs all that mattered was that I was hugging my brother," Kristen said.

Tears flowed from the reunion, which wouldn't of happened if Brandon knew where he was going one day last November on Camp Bondsteel.

"I was lost at the TOC (tactical operations center) and I was trying to get to South Town," Brandon recalled. "I waited for the next person to come out (to ask directions)."

That person was Col. Albert Johnson, the chief of staff for the previous rotation.

"So he walked me down and asked me a few questions, including where I was from," Brandon said. "I told him Ohio. 'So you're a Bengal's fan then,' he asked me. I said, 'Of course I have to be, my sister is a cheerleader for the Bengals.'"

That chance encounter led to the idea of the cheerleaders visiting Kosovo. Johnson made a personal phone call to the manager of the Bengal cheerleaders.

"Even when they told us we were going to Kosovo, I didn't believe it until I actually got off the plane," Kristen said.

It took two days for the "Ben-Gals," as they are known, to reach Kosovo.

"We are all very exhausted but we'll get over it and give the soldiers here a show they will never forget, in return for what they do for our country," Kristen said.

When Brandon joined the Army two years ago, Kristen was just his kid sister.

"While I've been gone she became a cheerleader for the Ben-Gals," he said.

It was his first chance to see her perform as a Ben-Gal.

"I'm nervous for her but this is so awesome," said Brandon before her performance.

The visit was also a chance for Kristen and the other cheerleaders to see Kosovo for the first time.

"Seeing the blown up homes makes you really appreciate all the things we have back home," Kristen said. "It's just a real culture shock."

The real blessing proved to be a brother and sister reunion.

"The Army can do great things for its soldiers," Brandon said. "Just take a look at what it's done for me. Not too many people get to see their sister on a deployment."



**Kristen Schneider performs during the country western number of the evening's performance at Camp Bondsteel, March 9.**

# A Portrait of Excellence

## 11 earn Expert Medical Field Badge on Camp Bondsteel

By Spc. Whitney Hughes

Right: Sgt. Jefferey Johnson, a medic with the 82nd Engineers smiles confidently as he answers a question on the written test portion of the Expert Field Medical Badge test March 5.

Photo by Spc. Whitney Hughes



Below: Chief Warrant Officer Jason Hyer, a pilot with the 236th Air Ambulance Medical Company, TFMF, crosses the finish line of the road march.

Photo by Spc. Matthew Lang



Eleven soldiers, seven enlisted and four officers, earned their Expert Field Medical Badge after a grueling five days of qualification capped by a 12-mile ruck march on March 10.

"I missed it last year. I knew I had to get it this time," said 1st Lt. Sharon Rosser, a physician's assistant with the 201st Forward Support Battalion.

The second time was a charm for Rosser, who was disqualified on her last attempt for dropping out of the ruck march.

Sixty-nine candidates, including two Greek soldiers, had intentions of earning one of the most coveted badges in the Army. Candidates had to pass a written examination and seven different lanes that tested everything from common tasks to litter transport to treating casualties and administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

By the end of testing more than two-thirds had dropped out.

Last year, the overall fail rate for the EMFB was 85 percent, according to Army statistics.

"It's the hardest badge to go for," said Sgt. Marcelino Espinosa Jr., a licensed practical nurse with TFMF. "Not just anybody can pass the test. If you earn this, it means you're one of the best and you really know what you're doing."

Espinosa spoke from experience. He came up short for the third time.

By the third event of the qualification, more than half of the candidates had been eliminated. The written test sunk 20 candidates, and the first lane, land navigation, purged another 22.

The candidates go through some of the lanes in teams, but they were all tested individually.

Each lane possessed its own challenges, said Capt. Michael Corbin, the officer in charge of the EFMB testing. The lanes that are not mentally challenging were physically challenging and vice versa.

The candidates had to complete seven out of 10 common task stations in the survival lane.

During the litter obstacle course they had to carry a patient on a litter and successfully negotiate six out of eight obstacles within 30 minutes.

In the Emergency Medical Technician lane their task was to treat four casualties and complete eight of 11 tasks within an hour.





Left: Lt. Tyler Bence, 2-63 medical platoon leader, dons his protective mask during the survival course March 8.

Photos by Spc. Whitney Hughes

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**“It’s the hardest badge to go for, not just anybody can pass the test.”**

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Sgt. Marcelino Espinosa Jr.,  
licensed practical nurse with TFMF

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Below: Sgt. Reina Rios, a licensed practical nurse with TFMF, attempts to lift a patient above her head during litter obstacle training.

They had to perform correct CPR in the next lane.

In their final two lanes prior to ruck march, candidates loaded casualties into vehicles and performed different casualty carrying techniques. They also had to operate four different forms of field communication.

Although the five-day testing was a rigorous challenge designed to eliminate all but the elite, the candidates were not sent out unprepared.

The week prior, they trained on each of the lanes and studied for the written test, said Corbin.

Preparation was the key to passing, said many candidates.

“If you really want it, you’ve got to take it seriously,” Espinosa said.

Spc. Stephen Christensen, a medic with 2-2 Infantry Battalion, used most of his preparation time to study for the written examination. But the test was not the only lane that took mental preparation, he said.

“In the EMT lane you’ve got a bunch of patients (to treat) and you can’t miss one little thing,” he said. “It’s the little things they get you on.”

The 11 soldiers who earned the badge matched the Army-wide success rate of 15 percent. Corbin attributed this success to the deployment environment - due to personnel shortages only the most prepared soldiers were sent to the testing.

In order to achieve success, it took knowledge, heart, physical endurance, motivation, and determination, Corbin said.

The following 11 soldiers had the right combination:

\*Spc. Shane Dehrone, medical specialist, 2-63 Armor Battalion

\*Spc. Brandy Gainsley, dental technician, 201st Forward Support Battalion

\*Sgt. Lula Gaulden, health care specialist, 201st FSB

\*Chief Warrant Officer Jason Hyer, pilot, 236th Medical Company

\*Capt. Scott McClellan, OIC of the surgeon cell, HHC, 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division

\*Spc. Ann Marie Norris, medical specialist, TFMF

\*Pvt. Tyler Prewitt, medical specialist, 2-2 Infantry Battalion

\*Capt. Shane Roach, logistics officer, TFMF

\*Pvt. Christopher Rodriguez, 2-2 Inf.

\*1st Lt. Sharon Rosser, physicians assistant, 201st FSB

\*Capt. Elaine Roy, nurse, TFMF







# Comrades in arms

By Sgt. Erin Elliott

Photos by Spc. Matthew Lang

**KAMENICA MUNICIPALITY, Kosovo** — Images of the Cold War pitting the United States and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) against each other are engraved in history. The official end of the Cold War following the collapse of the USSR brought the birth of many new nations, including Russia. Now, 12 years later, American and Russian soldiers are working side by side for a common goal in Kosovo.

The soldiers of the Russian 13th Tactical Group and American





soldiers serve in cooperation to bring security and stability to the people of Multi-National Brigade (East). There are no signs of the Cold War feelings of distrust. Instead, the soldiers are curious and want to learn from each other.

“We’ve trained to go to war with each other for many years and now we are here working together,” said Sgt. Charles Rife, a squad leader with Bravo Company, 1-63 Armor Battalion. “I believe the teamwork between the American and Russian soldiers has come a long way.”

“We sit down, talk and have coffee. People are really trying to get know each other. I think this is excellent,” said Rife. “One of the soldiers invited me to come to Moscow and said he would give me a tour of Moscow and Russia.”

The Russian soldiers expressed the same sentiment of wanting to get to know and become friends with their American counterparts.

“I’ve only been here a month. I have made many comrades, but not friends. But, I think we will be friends in the near future,” said Pvt. Antoly Borkalov, an armor personnel carrier navigator with 1st Airborne Company, 13th TG.

On a weekly basis, soldiers from 1st Airborne Co. and B Company set up vehicle checkpoints in the Kamenica Municipality to search for weapons, drugs, stolen vehicles and smuggled items. On the morning of Feb. 26, the soldiers have set up a checkpoint at the Administrative Boundary Line.

“They check the vehicles coming in from the ABL, and we check them heading out,” said Pfc. Charles Curtis, of B Company.

The language barrier is not usually a problem. The soldiers often communicate through a translator. But when a translator is unavailable they communicate through hand gestures, said Borkalov.

“It can be pretty funny at times,” said Rife. “This is very basic communication.”

“We are able to communicate very well this way,” added Borkalov.

For the soldiers of the 13th TG Recon Platoon and the U.S. Liaison and Coordination Element, the language barrier can work to their advantage. As they move tactically from house to house in search of illegal weapons, they try to

move unnoticed and hand signals are a good way to preserve that element of surprise.

The two teams work in sync with each other as they approach an abandoned house near Tuxhevc. Capt. Samuel Dean, the commander of the Liaison and Coordination Element, signals to the joint patrol to set up a perimeter around the house. Senior Sgt. Konstantin Bakaev, the senior recon NCO with the Recon Platoon, moves swiftly around the house to close the perimeter.

“Sound can carry a long way, so we’ll give a look, or hand or arm signal to let each other know what needs to happen next,” said Dean.

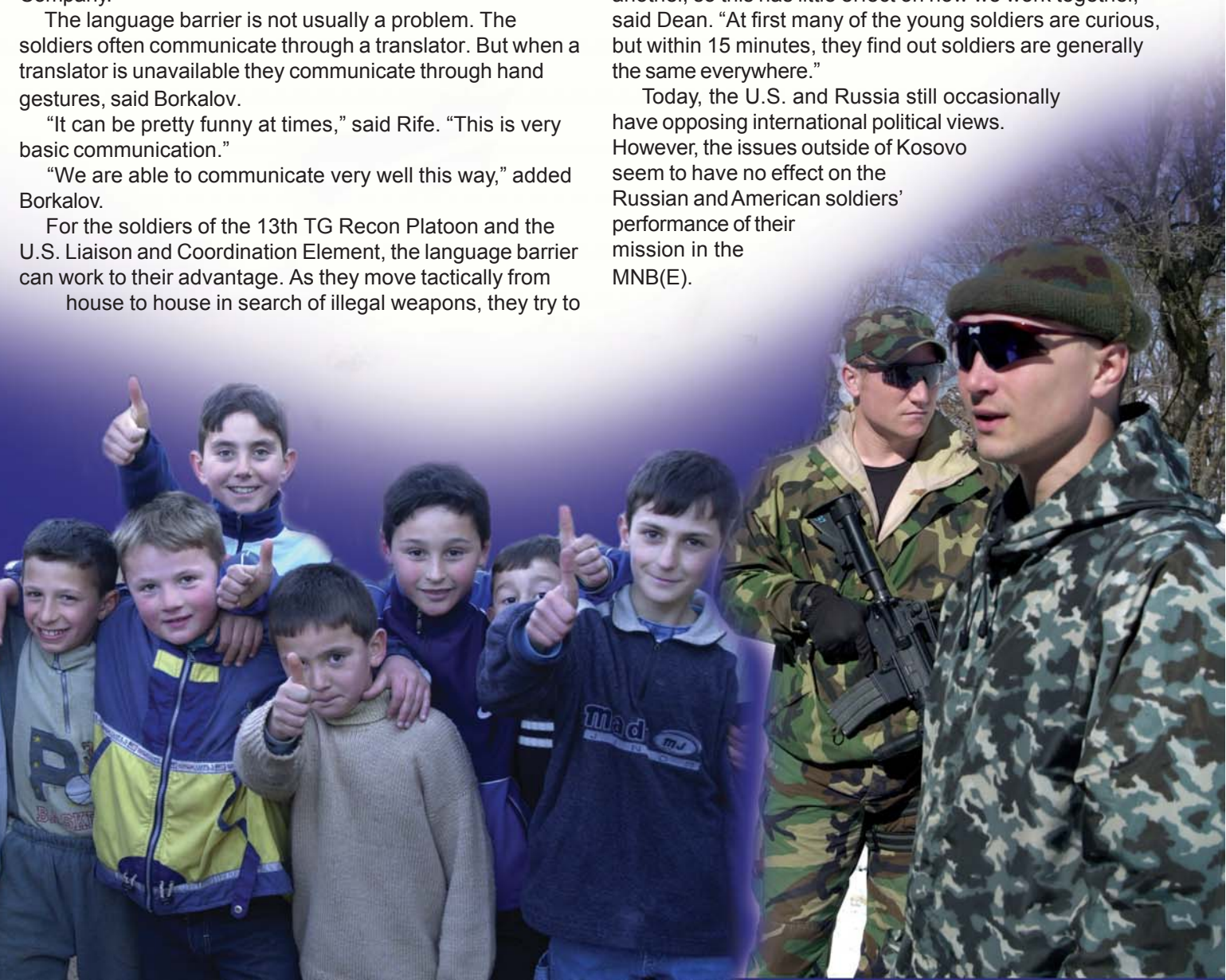
To observe this joint team of American and Russians soldiers, it appears as if they have been working together a long time.

They’ve been one team since last December. Their training as soldiers and commitment to the mission is what binds them together and makes them a good team, said Dean.

For decades, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were at odds with each other stemming from the post-World War II dilemma of how to deal with former Nazi occupied territory. The U.S. and the USSR found themselves at opposite ends of the political spectrum with democracy versus communism. This led to almost 50 years of distrust and political battles that many times edged on the brink of war.

“Most of our allies have been an enemy at one point or another, so this has little effect on how we work together,” said Dean. “At first many of the young soldiers are curious, but within 15 minutes, they find out soldiers are generally the same everywhere.”

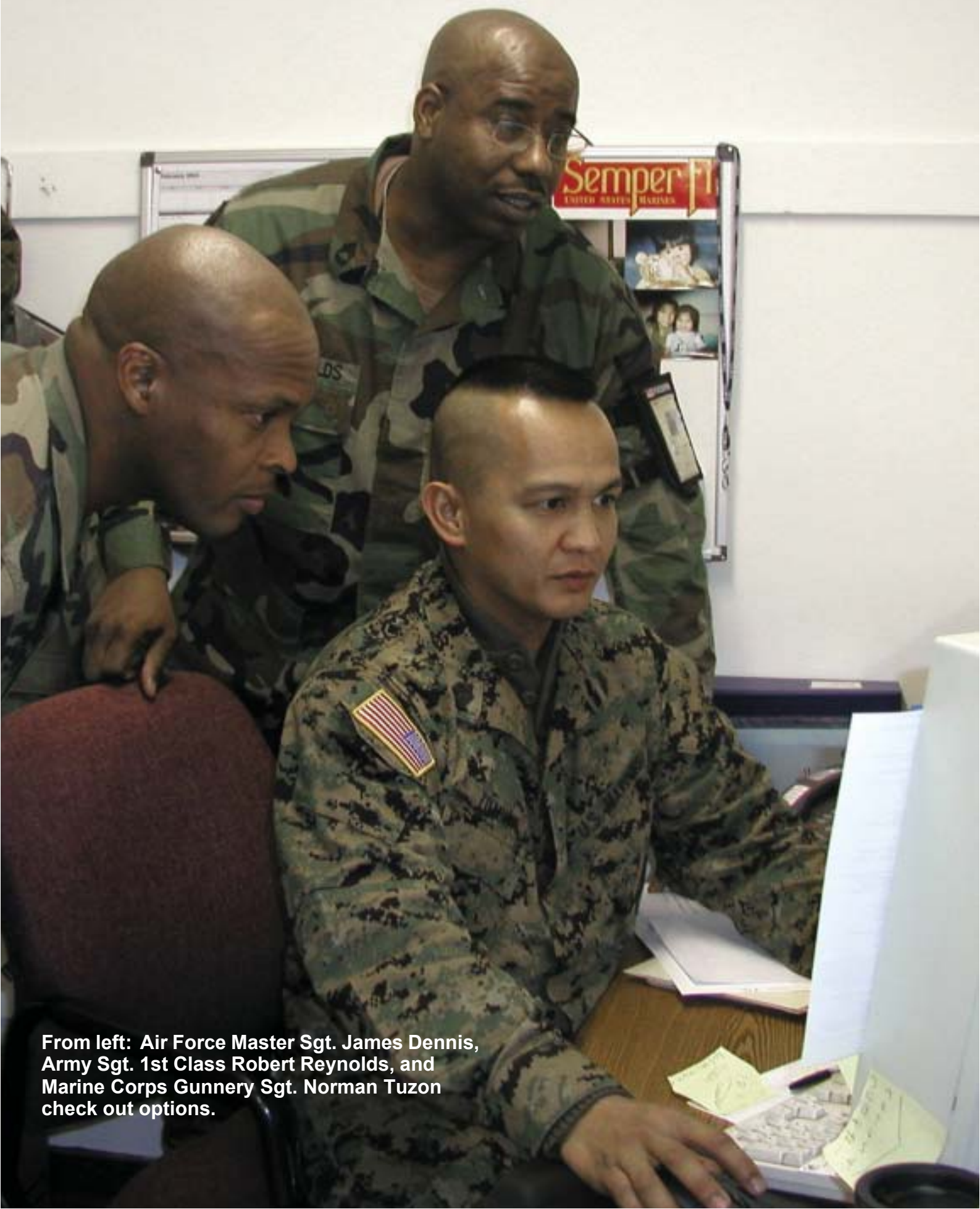
Today, the U.S. and Russia still occasionally have opposing international political views. However, the issues outside of Kosovo seem to have no effect on the Russian and American soldiers’ performance of their mission in the MNB(E).





# JCC hunts for the best buys

Story and photos by Spc. Catherine Caruso



From left: Air Force Master Sgt. James Dennis, Army Sgt. 1st Class Robert Reynolds, and Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Norman Tuzon check out options.



**C**apt. John Coombs, commander of the Joint Contract Center for Multi-National Brigade (East), knows you've heard the expression, even if you are reluctant to repeat it.

It's what everyone says when a piece of military-owned equipment isn't operating properly. It's what you say when everything stops working, from dry ink pens to vehicles. But confronted with it from the guy in charge of purchasing, who wants to admit even they have been guilty of occasionally uttering the expression: "What do you expect from something built/made/serviced by the lowest bidder?"

But why on earth does he want to hear it?

Because: it's no longer true.

The JCC has a license to spend. They are the comparison shoppers, bargain hunters, and overall buyers for everything from paper napkins to Temporary Motor Pool vehicles in MNB(E).

The "license" is called a warrant, and each warrant authorizes a member of the JCC to commit the government to paying a startling amount of money in a single transaction.

It could be a lot of fun, spending other people's money. But it's actually an awful lot of work. It means hours spent scouting out vendors, equations to analyze cost-benefit ratios and lots of research.

"If we buy you a digital camera, and the instructions are in every language but English, that's a problem," Coombs said.

It's not quite as simple as waiting for the lowest bidder to show up with the lowest bid. In fact, some things never go to bid at all. Suppliers for MNB(E) are as diverse as locally owned businesses, the AAFES Post Exchange, and Internet ordering from office supply stores back in the U.S.

How they decide what gets bought from whom is the result of a complicated concept called "Best Possible Value."

The U.S. military is no longer quite so worried about what the costs are upfront- although, nobody's supply budget is going up to cover the cost of luxury cars over economy sedans any time soon.

What the JCC figures out is what the costs are over the long run. In other words, if something is cheap, but it's junk, it won't last. If it costs more but lasts longer or requires less maintenance, by contrast, it's a bargain.

In addition to the obvious costs, the cost of travel or shipping has to be considered as well as the future costs, from the disposal of toxic paint for tactical vehicles to the repairs or replacement from typical wear and tear.

Furthermore, in KFOR, JCC doesn't always buy something simply because it is the best deal. Part of their mandate is to help rebuild Kosovo's economy, encouraging diversity by supporting minority businesses and rotating orders among vendors to stimulate economic development as a whole.

"We're injecting money, putting capital into the system that otherwise wouldn't be there," Coombs said.

The policy doesn't always result in the rock-bottom lowest overall price, but reaps the less tangible but extremely important benefit of helping rebuild the province's economy. It may ultimately benefit the province and the U.S. by shortening KFOR's duration.

Another job of the JCC is to provide a check to units' spending.

"You obviously have a budget and a right to budget what you need," said Gunnery Sgt. Norman Tuzon, the NCOIC of JCC.

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But letting them spend it without supervision is like the old caution against leaving a fox to guard the henhouse, Coombs added.

"The henhouses are the dollars, and the units are the foxes," he said. The JCC? They are the ones who guard the fox. They aren't there to keep units from spending their budgeted money, said Coombs. They are there to ensure the spare parts budget doesn't become a "spare" pool table in someone's day room.

Oddly enough, the JCC never touches the money. While they can make financial obligations, it's the finance section that actually cuts the checks.

"It's one more set of checks," Tuzon said.

## WHAT UNITS NEED TO KNOW

"Given this process, it takes time to do it right. Secondly, I can buy you anything you want. Anything you need, I can get it for you. But I have to know what it is," Coombs said.

Need a generator? OK, to produce how much power? 10 kilowatts? 5 kilowatts? Do you want it to be gasoline powered? Can you get gasoline? Or, maybe you should go with diesel?

"You have to identify exactly what you need," Coombs said, or the JCC can't make the best decisions to get you what you want.

While the JCC can do the market research, they can't read minds. The more information you can provide about the product you want and what it will be used for, the more likely it is you'll get what you need.

After all, Tuzon said, it's in everyone's interest to get it right the first time. If they don't, they may have to make a return, delaying the receipt of supplies units need and often costing extra in shipping and restocking fees.

"In a contingency operation like this, we obviously can't waste time or money. And when you need something, you need it," Tuzon said.

The other thing is they can get what you need now, or they can get it later.

"But understand 'now' comes at a price," Coombs warned.

Coombs said people also have to be careful not to make "unauthorized commitments or ratifications." That means not committing the government's money without permission.

It may mean using your cell phone or copying machine after its contract has expired or asking a contractor to perform work they haven't been contracted for.

Since units typically rotate through the theater every six months or so and some of the contracts cover a year's worth of service or more, it's easier to lose track than you might think.

## SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

It's a mission that is unique in the military, said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Reynolds, and that is what he likes about it. Every service brings something unique to the mission.

"There's a wealth of experience here that we wouldn't get from the Army alone," Reynolds said.

So while Coombs, an Army officer, may not know if 27 cases of pens is a reasonable supply request for a squadron, or a wing, Senior Airman Keith Rhodia does, Coombs said.

While Rhodia is the junior enlisted person in the office, he brings more years of experience than most NCOs. Unlike other services, Air Force personnel start training for their jobs as soon as they leave basic training, while the other services diversify by recruiting NCOs from other fields. In addition, Department of Defense civilian employees also support the



**Gunnery Sgt. Norman Tuzon assisted by "Vision" Computer Supply Associate Audul Pajazaitt purchases computer supply for MNB(E).**

mission. In Kosovo, there are local national employees.

"The bread and butter (of this operation) are the local people," Tuzon said. "They're our continuity. They were here from the very beginning, since this place was a tent."

It's true, confirmed Kushtrim Bequiri, one of the local procurement analysts employed by the office. Originally hired as TRW translators to talk to vendors and read invoices, the analysts were indispensable locating new vendors as new businesses opened and old business owners returned to the province after the war. Bequiri helped find the vendors who provided the gravel and fill to build Camp Bondsteel.

"We got them from everywhere, thousands of trucks. You could see the clouds of dust (from miles away)," Bequiri said. "It was like building the pyramids!"

While the JCC no longer needs to take on projects of quite that size and scope, they still have their share of interesting operations.

During the interview, Tuzon had just returned from Bulgaria to rent a railhead for moving excess vehicles from Camp Able Sentry to Germany.

While he could have put the tanks on heavy equipment transports and given the drivers a case of Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), Tuzon instead tracked down the only railhead in the area capable of transporting the tanks to their destination.

He leased the real estate to park the tanks and transport vehicles until they were ready to ship, contracted for hotel rooms to house the crews, arranged payment for their meals, and hired a doctor and ambulance to stand by at the site in case anyone got hurt.

For Fighter Management Pass Program trips, they pay for the rooms and meals for the military police at the hotel, and contract with local hospitals in case a service member requires care. For the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation ski program, they arrange the transportation, the rates, and attended many meetings between the resort owner, municipal leaders, and civil affairs.

The JCC is even responsible for buying the "free" popcorn at the MWR.

While KFOR is primarily an Army mission these days for the U.S., "we apply the Joint Contract Center concept here because it works," Coombs said. Everyone provides different expertise to an ever changing and distinctively complex mission.

It's also a job that continues to grow in importance as the military turns to contractors to provide more and more of the services once handled by soldiers, from housing to food service to wash racks to laundry facilities. If done right, using contractors during deployments cost less in the long run than maintaining units with similar capabilities. In that respect, the JCC is striving to both be and provide the best possible value.



# “Dawgs” of 4-3 ADA look to the sky and streets

By Spc. Christopher Gookin

**ZITINJE, Kosovo**— Normally, their attention is focused upward, eyes scanning the sky for enemy threats. But on a late February day in Zitinje, the “Dawgs” of Delta Battery, 4-3 Air Defense Artillery Battalion, were walking along a street, talking with locals and relishing the attention of appreciative children.

It was not your typical air defense mission, but then again, nothing is ever typical about a peacekeeping mission. The Dawgs seemed to like the change of pace.

“The guys like being out with the people,” said Sgt. Brandon Yates, a team chief with 4-3 ADA. “It’s like instant gratification, seeing the kids and knowing you’re out there making things better brings honor to the mission.”

The Dawgs, who are attached to the 2-63 Armor Battalion at Camp Magrath, are prepared to provide air defense and early warning in support of combat operations for the Big Red One in Multi-National Brigade (East).

D Battery, 4-3 ADA is a Short Range Air Defense or SHORAD unit, based out of Kitzigen, Germany. In its wartime role, the battery uses the humvee-mounted Avenger system to protect the division’s assets from aerial threats, which include anything from fixed wing to cruise missiles. The battery also has the Man Portable Air Defense (MANPAD) unit that consists of a team and a shoulder-fired system.

In Kosovo, 4-3 ADA soldiers have worked in guard towers as well as conducted mounted and dismounted patrols to help ensure a safe and secure environment.

“Peacekeeping duty breaks up the monotony of the battery mission,” said Staff Sgt. Lamont Carrington, a platoon sergeant with 4-3 ADA. “It gives you the opportunity to get on the ground and practice other soldier skills.”

Said Pfc. Victor Hardman, “The experience in Kosovo has given me more appreciation for the things I’ve got now. There are harsh times all over.”

In the beginning of February, there was a funeral at the Zitinje church, recalled Sgt. Kristopher Badgely, a team chief with 4-3 ADA. The Albanians watched from a distance while the Serbs buried their dead. Afterward, one of the Albanians came by the tower and told Badgely’s team that if KFOR wasn’t present, there probably would have been an incident.

“I try to give them the big picture,” said 1st Lt. Re’ Pinkombe, a platoon leader with 4-3 ADA. “How they fit into (the mission in Kosovo).”

His soldiers have a firm grasp of their role.

“This is for the people, that’s the main reason we’re



From left, Sgts. Brandon Yates and Anthony Kirksey, both team chiefs with Delta Battery 4-3 ADA, work to fix a problem with the M3 .50 caliber Avenger mounted machine gun.

here,” said Spc. Derrick Boddy, a 4-3 ADA gunner.

Zitinje is a town that suffered during the ethnic strife. About 100 Serbian houses were destroyed. An Orthodox church that sits on a hillside remains vulnerable to vandalism, according to KFOR officials.

“It’s not about sides, it’s about time,” said Pfc. Bryan Kennedy, a gunner with 4-3 ADA.

## Peacekeeper profile



### Isaac Sims

Age: 25

Rank: Pfc.

MOS: 11B, rifleman

Unit: 2-2 Inf.

Camp: Monteith

Hometown: Houston, Texas

**What are you good at?** Running, shooting, all sports, and making people laugh

**Why did you join the Army?** To help people.



From left, Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Bond, senior personnel sergeant, and Staff Sgt. Zenaïdo Magallanes, S-1 personnel NCO, work together on a range of personnel actions and records issues for soldiers at Camp Monteith.

# NCO keeps careers on track

Story and photo by Master Sgt. John Barr

**CAMP MONTEITH, Kosovo** – Behind every good soldier there is another soldier, someone like Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Bond, keeping their careers on track.

For the better part of two decades, Bond, the senior personnel sergeant and S1 NCOIC for 2-2 Infantry Battalion, has been a quiet force behind hundreds of soldiers, maintaining their personnel records with a keen eye and the heart of a big brother.

"I always like to help soldiers with personnel issues," Bond said. "We do try to take care of all the problems they come to us with, which is why we're here."

At Camp Monteith, the name "Bond" generates a reaction very different from the Hollywood version.

"He's the hardest working NCO at Camp Monteith," said Staff. Sgt. Zenaïdo Magallanes, the S1 personnel NCO.

Indeed, this Bond doesn't have to rely on high tech gizmos to complete his mission.

"With Bond's 21 years of service, he has an answer for any problem," said Sgt. David Watts, S1 administration NCO for HHC. "He is a very proficient and knowledgeable NCO and it will be a sad day in the U.S. Army when he retires this fall."

Bond began his military career 21 years ago when he enlisted in Baltimore, Maryland. He has served in the Adjutant General Corps at posts worldwide, including Alaska, Korea and Germany where he met his wife.

She is now retired from the army (she worked in personnel) and is an ordained pastor and a mother of two girls, ages nine and 16.

Through two decades, Bond has witnessed the modernization of the U.S. Army's personnel system. He started his career on a typewriter. Now he works with machines that

produce ID cards embedded with tiny computer chips.

Bond has helped war veterans recover missing records, assisted family members find information on the military service of a relative, and of course he is the go-to-guy for the men and women of 2-2 Inf.

After a few months at Camp Monteith, Bond is easily recognized by many of the soldiers outside of the personnel office for his work with them as well as his time as an official on the basketball courts.

"It's a good feeling when I walk across the outside basketball court here and so many soldiers say hi to me because I have had the opportunity to work with them and help them in some way," Bond said.

Working in cooperation with other sections that affect personnel, Bond's interest and skills have made an impact on soldiers like Sgt. Monika Lamb, the NCOIC of military pay at Camp Monteith.

"Sgt. 1st Class Bond has been a big help," said the finance specialist. "He plays a role in my work load and he is very knowledgeable and very professional."

Soldiers have done well to heed Bond's advice.

"Keep your records current," Bond said. "Even dental screening, awards, schools and college courses. It's all going to be important to you at some point in your military career and afterwards."

"Don't wait until the last minute because as with most sections, personnel is understaffed, and we can help better when regular appointments are made instead of a lot coming at one time."

But if you have to stand in line to see Bond, it is worth the wait.





A soldier from 2-63 takes aim during a recent qualification at Camp Magrath.

# 2-63 HHC aims for perfection

Story and photo by Spc. Catherine Caruso

**CAMP MAGRATH, Kosovo** – There is an almost soothing ritual to certain military routines: the recitation of standards from Field Manual 21-20 before a PT test, the rhythmic cadence of a unit marching in formation and the instructions from the tower on a hot range.

“Are you ready on the left? Are you ready on the right?” called out Staff Sgt. Cosmos Thomas, Alpha Team maintenance chief and acting range NCOIC for 2-63 Armor Battalion, on a recent crisp Saturday morning. “Firers, lock and load one 20-round magazine...”

For the soldiers of HHC, good enough just isn’t good enough – not when it comes to rifle marksmanship.

“Our goal here at Camp Magrath is 90 percent expert. That’s the commander’s intent,” said Staff Sgt. Guillermo Fonseca, 2-63’s force protection NCOIC.

It may sound unlikely, but Fonseca has examples to back him up, like HHC’s commo section, which has improved its average score from 33 percent marksmen to 85 percent experts since arriving at Camp Magrath in November.

Not many units can say they put their soldiers on the firing line as often as 2-63.

It was a past commander’s forward thinking and the fact that Camp Magrath came with a 25-meter firing range nestled behind a couple of berms just beyond the motor pool.

Since their arrival, 2-63 soldiers have been using it to their advantage.

For HHC, Fonseca briefs the squads on Monday, files the paperwork, and gets them their rounds. Squad leaders are responsible for primary marksmanship instruction and preparing their squads, but when it comes to shooting at

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their assigned time, all they really have to do is show up, Fonseca said.

Each unit has time reserved for firing every week to rotate among their squads, and soldiers serving on force protection at the camp fire weekly.

Overall, that means soldiers at the camp may fire as often as twice a month during the time that they’re deployed.

It’s almost to get sick of it, said one soldier on the range on Thomas’s watch.

But most soldiers, like Pfc. Shaun Gillespie, said. “It’s relaxing. It relieves the tension from the week.”

“You can’t say no to free rounds,” said Sgt. Christopher Cook, NCOIC for heavy-wheeled vehicle maintenance.

“The more firing, the better,” agreed Master Sgt. William Tucker, 2-63 motor sergeant.

But a day at the range is far from a day off. Many of the maintenance soldiers spent Saturday shooting, only to return to the bays when they finished to work late into the night.

“We still have to stay and fix the stuff that is broken,” Thomas pointed out.

Like many sections, Thomas’s soldiers have been able to take advantage of the extra range time to qualify on 9mm weapons as well as M-16s while stationed at Camp Magrath.

“Forty out of 40,” said Spc. John Enriquez, a light-wheeled vehicle mechanic, after his turn.

Enriquez typically qualifies expert, he admitted, but he never shot quite that well before.

“You can always use the practice,” he said.

# MNB(E) hosts weightlifting competition

Story and photo by Spc Matthew Lang

Cpl. Trevis Guy, a tank crewman with the 2-63 Armor Battalion, and Sgt. Tenise Sanchez, a mechanic with HHC, 201st Logistic Task Force, made a good case for being the strongest male and female soldiers in Multi-National Brigade (East) by taking first place in a weightlifting competition held at Camp Bondsteel on Feb. 23.

Guy won the overall male category with a 454-pound dead lift, a 425-pound squat and a 380-pound bench press. Sanchez won with a 185-pounds dead lift, a 167-pound squat and a 155-pound bench press.

"I was very excited because it was the first competition I've ever won," Sanchez said. "However, it would have been a lot more challenging if there were more females."

Guy, on the other hand, has competed before. He said he was pleased with his performance.

Thirteen multinational soldiers competed in the event, sponsored by Morale, Welfare and Recreation and held at the North Town field house.

Similar to Olympics, the weightlifting competition featured three categories — the dead lift, squat and bench press.

"The hardest is the squat because it demands full power and technique," said 1st Lt. Theodore Salimkas, platoon leader of the 501st Mechanized Greek Battalion. "In my mind, it is the king of the exercises."

The purpose of the competition was to give MNB(E) service members a chance to test their strength among the different base camps, said Johnny Davis, recreation director for MWR. His other goals were to educate soldiers on the proper lifting techniques and build international relations.

"I get to touch lives through my work," Davis said. "I try to offer a wide range of fitness programs to help people reach their goals and lead stronger and healthier life styles. The key part in being successful is having a strong mind and body."

Spc. Catalion Ortiz, a tank crewman with 2-63 said, "I love competing against different nations because it lets me compare myself to them."

Ortiz took fifth place overall.

"The priority, however, is the mission," said Salimkas. "But events like these help strengthen our character and will to achieve higher targets."

The origin of competitive lifting dates back to the begin-



From left, Sgt. Tenise Sanchez, of the 201st LTF, and Cpl. Trevis Guy, of 2-63, are the winners of an MNB(E) weightlifting competition sponsored by MWR on Camp Bondsteel, Feb 23.

ning of recorded history where man's fascination with physical ability can be found among numerous ancient writings. An ancient Chinese text tells of potential soldiers having to pass lifting tests.

## Peacekeeper profile



### Jermaine Phillips

Age: 21  
Rank: Spc.  
MOS: 11B, rifleman  
Unit: 2-2 Inf.  
Camp: Monteith  
Hometown: Chicago, Illn.

**Why did you join?** It was a dream.

**What advice would you give soldiers here?** To have fun, keep your head up, it is almost over.



# 7th EWS forecasts rain or shine

By Spc. Christopher Gookin

**Q&A with Maj. Keith Hugo, MNB(E) Staff Weather Officer**

**GE:** What is the 7<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Weather Squadron's role in Operations Joint Forge and Joint Guardian?

**KH:** Our role is to provide 24/7 aircrew flight weather briefing support to U.S. Army helicopters of the Multi-National Brigade (East) and staff weather officer support to the MNB(E) Commanding General as well as resource protection for personnel and equipment at Camp Bondsteel. To accomplish this mission we provide flight weather briefings for aviators within MNB(E), ensuring flight safety during training and real world missions. When required, we issue weather warnings, watches and advisories for all of MNB(E) that provide commanders advanced notice of impending inclement weather conditions.

**GE:** Provide some insight into the day-to-day operations of the squadron.

**KH:** Day-to-day operations for the duty forecaster vary depending on the missions. One steadfast mission is the production of the Commander's Update Brief (CUB). Weather observations are required once an hour and much more frequently during bad weather. The forecaster must also brief and update aircrews of current and forecast weather conditions. Also, 24-hour manning is required to support emergency helicopter Medevac operations.

**GE:** How is the job in a deployed environment different from the job at home?

**KH:** The job is essentially the same. The slides we produce are a little different than in garrison, but all of the flight weather briefing support is the same.

**GE:** What obstacles do you face in a deployed environment? (i.e. outdated equipment, lack of proper equipment, makeshift equipment, etc. and how does that affect the job?)

**KH:** Initially, there are several obstacles in a deployed environment. First, there is usually a lack of historical weather data often used to determine general weather patterns for the area. Our equipment is fairly robust, but it can take a long time to get replacements should something break. Most of our equipment is high tech, which can lead to some potential problems with the absence of an equipment subject matter expert. Equipment that is difficult to set up and get operational often lengthens time required to become operational. Often times the equipment used in garrison is different than that used in field type conditions. Forecasters train on this equipment but unless used on a continuous basis, there is usually a slight learning curve once set up and operational.

**GE:** How has the squadron adapted to those obstacles to make the mission run smoothly?

**KH:** We have established relationships with our Army customer as an integrated part of the team with a genuine sense of cooperation and teamwork

**GE:** What provides the greatest sense of accomplish-

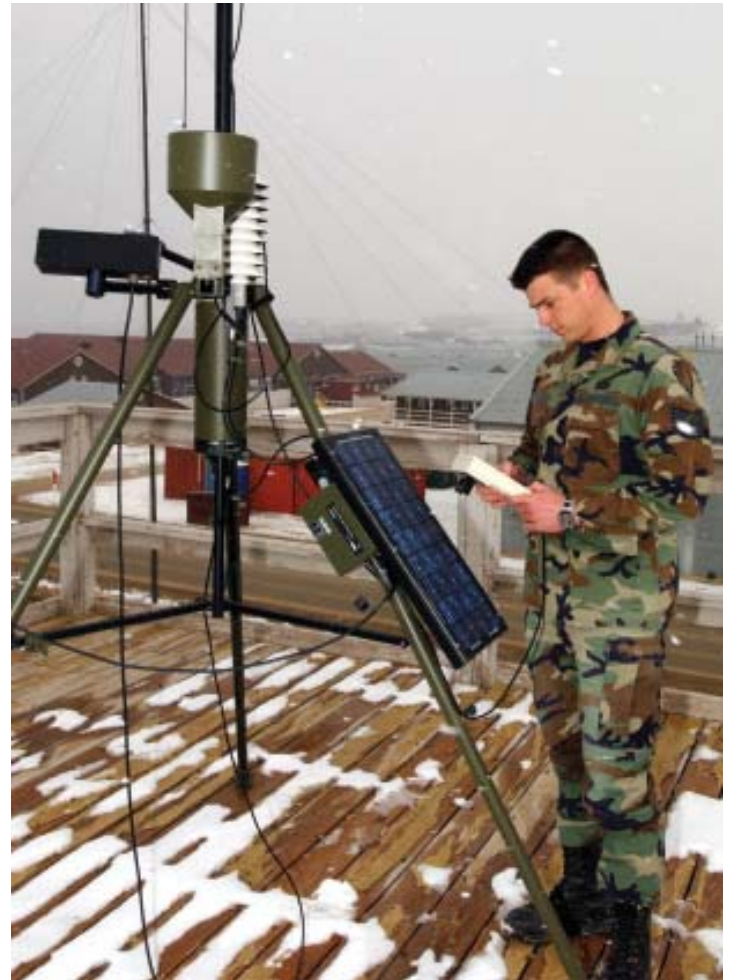


Photo by Spc. Christopher Gookin

**Tech. Sgt. Sean Hansen, of the 7th Expeditionary Weather Squadron, checks the Tactical Meteorological Observing System on Camp Bondsteel, 22 Feb.**

ment for airmen in your squadron?

**KH:** By providing our customers accurate and reliable forecasts we enable our customers to make critical decisions regarding weather impacts to operations, resulting in successful mission accomplishment.

**GE:** What are some of the challenges of the weather in Kosovo?

**KH:** One of the biggest challenges to our mission in Kosovo is the lack of climatology. There is no history of the weather in Kosovo. Additionally the terrain provides challenges to the weather as well as the lack of weather reporting stations throughout the sector and Kosovo. The area has many mountainous regions and valleys, these weather systems get caught in the mountains and stay in one place, in flat terrain the system would move through flat terrain.

## Advisor continued from page 2

loyalty, dignity, honor, respect, and selfless service," she said. "They certainly know what these things are. But when our soldiers are out there on patrol every day, they're men and women, they're older and they are younger, they're of various religions, ethnic groups, and color of skin.

"The soldiers are leading by example - they are showing the people of this divided province how to extend those values to one another. We draw our strength from diversity and it is fascinating to see how that can translate to this place. That is

a legacy you leave behind. So when people say, 'Hey, I didn't do anything or this place is never going to change,' I say, 'absolutely not. It is a privilege for me to watch you guys do this and you're not even aware of it.'"

"I cannot imagine having done anything else with the last four years of my life," Perezic said. "As I think about it, the peacekeepers that I have come to love may very well have to be the war fighters they were trained to be. I am proud of every single one of them. It's the soldiers that move me," she said. "I absolutely adore them."



From left, 1st Lt. Christopher Hormel, Sarah Druckenmiller, Master Sgt. Mark Dallman, Spc. Gabriel Sarmiento, Suzie Woodring and Sgt. Janette Duarte (both seated), all with HHD, 793rd MPs, watch the promotion of Master Sgt. Richard Woodring at Camp Bondsteel via video telecommunications in Bamberg, Germany, Feb. 28.

# Promoting the future

## *Family joins Master Sgt. during promotion ceremony via video conferencing*

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Dan Landry

Over the span of one's military career there are high points and low points. All too often the high points come at a time when our loved ones cannot be there to share in the moment.

On Feb. 28, Sgt. 1st Class Richard A. Woodring, detachment sergeant of HHD, 793rd Military Police Battalion was the exception. Through modern technology and the persistence of a few dedicated colleagues, Woodring was able to share his promotion to master sergeant with his wife, Suzie, family members and friends back at his home station in Bamberg, Germany.

"The promotion itself was very special," Woodring said. "But to have my wife and daughter be able to see the ceremony made my day."

Woodring's family and friends watched the ceremony held at Camp Bondsteel via a video telecommunication connection.

"I am so happy I could be a part of this and that I did not have to miss this very important event in my husband's life," she said. "And thank you to all who helped make this happen."

Sgt. Major Dorsey Newcomb performed the pinning ceremony along with Master Sgt. David Jurina, both of HHD.

Newcomb coordinated the event with the Video Telecommunications Center staff.

"As a sergeant major I was exceptionally proud to participate in Master Sgt. Woodring's promotion ceremony," Dorsey said. "The rank of master sergeant is very significant in prestige and importance and I think it is essential for all soldiers to see the emphasis that we place on such an accomplishment."

"Conducting the promotion over VTC was a great opportunity for Master Sgt. Woodring's family and our rear

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From left, Sgt. Maj. Dorsey L. Newcomb and Master Sgt. David Jurina, of HHD 793rd MPs, pin the the rank of Master Sgt. on Richard A. Woodring.

detachment to be a part of his ceremony," Dorsey added. "The VTC staff was very instrumental in making the ceremony success. It would not have been possible if it were not for their persistence in getting the coordination done."

During the ceremony, Woodring honored tradition by selecting the soldier he thought best qualified to fill his shoes after their return to home station. Without hesitation, Woodring chose Staff Sgt. David Tookmanian, of the HHD S3 section.

Woodring spoke of Tookmanians' many qualities. He was confident that Tookmanian would do an outstanding job in his

new position.

"It was a bit of a surprise to me," Tookmanian said. "I certainly didn't expect to be a part of the ceremony. I consider it a tremendous honor to be able to keep company with Master Sgt. Woodring. He is without a doubt the keystone of this unit."

After the official ceremony, unit members said their good-byes and left for a post-ceremony dinner at the North Town Dining Facility VIP room. Woodring stayed behind to say goodbye to his wife and daughter, and thank them for making a special moment unforgettable.

## GOT PHOTOS?

The Guardian East invites you, our U.S. and multinational service members, to submit your favorite photos of your time here in Kosovo.

The photos will be used in a special section for an upcoming issue of the Guardian East. If there is a good story behind your photo, we'd like you to include that too.

You can either email your photos and the story behind them to: [guardianeast@bondsteel2.aur.army.mil](mailto:guardianeast@bondsteel2.aur.army.mil) or burn them onto a CD and drop it off at the Public Affairs shop, Building 1320, Rooms 2 or 3.

We ask that you properly identify people in your photos with full name, rank and unit. Also, tell us what's going in the photo and when and where it was taken.

The staff of Guardian East looks forward to presenting your views of KFOR 4B!

# Scenes of Kosovo



**A mosque sits on a hillside in the village of Mahadzer Babus in the municipality of Lipjan, March 17.**

**Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dan Landry**